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ABSTRACT

The paper explores measurement issues surrounding acculturation, discusses the Children's Acculturation Scale (CAS), relates results of several studies dealing with the acculturation and mental health of Mexican Americans, and concludes with a substantiation of the idea that the process of acculturation is stressful and impacts on adjustment. Noting that Mexican Americans are not a homogeneous cultural group and that therefore broad generalizations about Mexican Americans are usually inappropriate, the paper covers such measurement issues as a definition of acculturation, the validation process (including finding and measuring an unacculturated sample), and the measurement of children. The CAS is described as a 10-item Likert-type scale which takes about 5 minutes to complete; on a scale of one to five, individuals scoring near one tend to be very "Mexican" and those scoring near five tend to be very "Anglicized." Studies are cited that involved subjects ranging from grade one children to university level students to randomly selected adults; these studies generally showed that a bicultural orientation produced a healthy psychological adjustment. Other measurement issues include the need to: replicate previous majority/minority culture comparison studies to investigate within-group variability, focus on a broader spectrum of acculturation, and place more emphasis on investigating the process of acculturation and its relationship to mental health adjustment in Mexican American children. (BRR)

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Acculturation Levels of Mexican American Children: Measurement Issues and Implications for Mental Health

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Acculturation Levels of Mexican American Children:

Measurement Issues and Implications for Mental Health

The problems associated with acculturation and its effect on behavior have been of interest to psychologists, psychiatrists, and educators for many years and they continue to command widespread interest among behavioral scientists (Padilla, 1980), particularly those interested in Hispanics. It is now a well accepted fact that Mexican Americans are not a homogeneous cultural group and, therefore, broad generalizations about Mexican Americans are usually inappropriate. Rather, the differential levels of acculturation among Mexican Americans need to be taken into account. It would not be inappropriate to suggest that most, if not all, research that has been conducted up until now with Mexican Americans (or all other minorities for that matter) without consideration for different acculturation levels of the subjects should be replicated. I propose that we would find very different results once this confounding variable is controlled for.

Many of the studies which compare minority group members with the majority culture or with norms based on the majority group, suffer from the problem of considering the minority group as a homogeneous group. A conceptual and methodological limitation of these studies pertains to the manner in which the "cultural variable" is defined, typically categorically as Mexican American (or Hispanic, Chicano, etc.) vs Anglo which ignores within-group variability. The reader doesn't know, therefore, which sub-grouping of Mexican Americans, for example, the

researchers are referring to. In all probability, this type of homogeneous grouping masks many significant interactions. For example, Reilly and Knight (1970) found higher L scores and Lower Pa scores among Mexican American college students compared to non-Mexican Americans. McCreary and Padilla (1977) found that Mexican American misdemeanor offenders referred to a forensic psychiatric program scored higher on the L, K, and Hs scales of the MMPI as compared to Anglos. Holland (1979) found higher MF scores among Anglo as compared to Mexican American adult offenders. In these studies global comparisons of ethnicity are made, and it is not known whether these results apply to all Mexican Americans, low socio-economic status Mexican Americans, etc.

Measurement Issues

Acculturation is a multifaceted phenomenon composed of numerous dimensions, factors, constructs, or subcomponents--not all of which have been identified or specified. There is also evidence that acculturation is a dynamic, yet domain specific, and multidimensional characteristic (Padilla, 1980); that is, acculturation occurs along a number of different planes, some of which may or may not be related to each other (Cuellar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980). Therefore, in measuring acculturation levels one encounters the same problems that psychometricians have encountered in measuring intelligence. First, there is the problem of definition. Can we define acculturation in a manner that is satisfactory to all? Secondly, once a definition is agreed on, can it accurately be measured? As with intelligence, there are so many

variables that impact on the acculturation process that one can only hope to estimate true acculturation levels.

Recently several scales have been developed to measure acculturation among adults (Cuellar, et al., 1980; Olmedo & Padilla, 1978), adolescents (Olmedo, Martinez, & Martinez, 1978), and children (Franco, 1983). Following are some of the issues involved in the development of these acculturation scales.

Validation process. There are, of course, several techniques to validate instruments. A technique often employed is to find individuals thought to be at different levels of a particular construct (e.g., high and low acculturated persons) and then determining whether the instrument will identify them as such. Developing an instrument to measure acculturation typically includes finding individuals that would be considered very unacculturated and noting their performance on the new instrument. Unacculturated individuals, for the most part, do not speak English, which means that the scale needs to be translated. The question then arises as to whether or not the English and the Spanish (or translated version) measure the same thing. Many times the questions which are translated literally, lose their initial meaning. Hence, there is some variation on what the two instruments measure. For example, think of the statement, "I feel guilty," a commonly used statement in many personality inventories. A Spanish translation of this statement that has been used is "Me siento culpable." Yet these two statements have very different meanings.

This difference in the meaning of the statements can lead to misinterpretation of an individual's responses. When the responses of

the respondents to the Spanish version are then compared to norms established with English versions, there is a good possibility for misdiagnosis. For example, Padilla, Olmedo, and Loya (1982) reported on a study in which Pucheu and Rivera (1971) administered the MMPI to a sample of over 5000 medical school students in Mexico over a three year period. Using American norms resulted in half the students being categorized as individuals susceptible to severe psychological disorders and in probable need of psychiatric attention. Concluding that American norms produced too high a number of "false positives," Pucheu and Rivera developed Mexican norms which resulted in a substantially smaller percentage evaluated as potentially at high risk.

In addition to the English-Spanish translation problem, many bilingual Mexican Americans have a tendency to use both languages interchangeably. While that in itself is not a problem, the researcher, particularly one that is unfamiliar with this phenomenon, can jump to inappropriate conclusions. For example, this writer recently attended a birthday party in which the English monolingual host playfully asked the children what they thought might be inside the "pinata." The host suggested that since it was very heavy it might have rocks or nails or maybe wood. A four year old child stood up and responded that it probably wasn't wood because wood usually has "espinas." The host responded, "wood has peanuts?" with a puzzled look on his face, probably suspecting that the little boy was less than intelligent.

Measuring an unacculturated sample. Americans who have gone through our educational system have, for the most part, been "tested to

death." American kids succumb to testing almost daily and respond to classroom tests, inventories, surveys, and interviews almost with no hesitation. This is a particularly acute problem in university towns where most of the research is done and the researchers have a limited number of subjects to choose from. Responding to questionnaires has become such a common occurrence that at times one forgets that there is the option of not responding. We respond to them without giving it a second thought. Most respondents are so "test-wise" or, in this case, "survey-wise" that they don't even need to read the directions.

Individuals who have not gone through our educational system do not have this experience. They require more time for explanation of the directions and have a tendency to read into the question more than is intended. If the researcher is interested in a "totally" unacculturated Hispanic then he/she would question a Mexican, for example, living in Mexico, who has never been in the United States. This also presents a problem in that, in general, the Mexican students have not been inundated with questionnaires, inventories, and tests and, therefore, quite probably have a different mind set when responding to these instruments. Recently, the author was involved in the administration of a translated version of a Depression, Anxiety, and Hostility Scale to students in a Mexican school system. While they were very accomodating and helped out with the initial administration and put up with some funny sounding statements, they did not complain very much. However, when they were asked to respond to the same instrument two weeks later so that a test-retest reliability coefficient could be calculated, their tolerance came to a halt. While

they still responded to the instrument, it was apparent that they weren't all too serious. (It takes courage to administer the same inappropriate instrument to the same person twice.)

Measurement of Children. In addition to the above problems, there are added problems in measuring any construct in children. Children are less literate so the typical survey-questionnaire approach is not effective with them. Levels of acculturation for children can be determined by observation, interviews, or indirectly through their parents, teachers, or counselors. In measuring large numbers of children, the latter approach appears to be the most feasible.

Acculturation levels of children have received little attention in the literature. A major effort in the federal government dealing with mental health has been in terms of primary prevention. If we can assume that there is some relationship between acculturation and adjustment and we are interested in preventing maladjustment where else better to start prevention programs than with children!!

It is common sensical that the process of acculturation would add stress to any child's living situation. Particularly with the unacculturated child who enters school and immediately experiences culture shock. The child then makes the interpretation that his behavior, values, ideas (i.e., his culture) is not good and those values, ideas, etc., postulated by the school system are better.

In addition to this we have the "acculturation gap" between parents and child, whereby the parents are relatively unacculturated and the child is quickly becoming acculturated. Sometimes this happens because of the parents' wishes (e.g., forcing the child to speak

English only and somehow connotating that the majority culture is the only way) or sometimes because of the child's wish (sometimes to the point of being embarrased about their parents and their heritage). This acculturation gap can be most stressful.

Unfortunately, the literature on the effects of acculturation on children is quite meager. There are several reasons for this including the lack of acculturation scales that can be used with children. Following is a description of an acculturation scale developed for use with children. Hopefully, the availability of such a scale will enhance the research being conducted with Mexican American children.

An Acculturation Scale for Children

Franco (1983) developed an acculturation scale to be used with Mexican American children (see appendix). The instrument is a ten-item Likert-type scale which requires the rater--someone who knows the child well, for example, a teacher, counselor, or parent--to respond on a one-to-five scale. The Children's Acculturation Scale (CAS) takes about five minutes to complete. The total score on the scale is the sum of all responses to the ten multiple-choice items. The acculturation score equals the mean response: i.e., the total score divided by the number of items answered. The acculturation score ranges from one to five: the higher the score the more acculturated the individual is. Individuals scoring near one tend to be very "Mexican;" those scoring near five tend to be very "Anglicized;" and those scoring near three tend to be bicultural.

Several measures of reliability have been established for CAS: test-retest (.97, $p \leq .001$), internal consistency by means of a coefficient alpha (.77, $p \leq .01$), and interrater reliability (.93, $p \leq .001$).

In addition, several techniques were used to establish validity. The CAS correlated highly with the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans (Cuellar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980): $r = .76$, $p < .01$.

The CAS was also factor analyzed and yielded three factors which accounted for the following variance: 46.98%, 16.35, and 8.81, respectively. The three factors were Factor I, which reflected an individual's language preference, usage, and proficiency and peer associations. For example, the items with the highest loading on this Factor were item 6, identification preference (.90); item 7, with whom does child associate (.88); and item 5, language preference (.86).

Factor II was composed of items reflecting parental occupations and educational level of head of household. The items for this Factor and their loadings were as follows: Father's occupation (.71), mother's occupation (.71), and educational level of head of household (.79).

Factor III consisted of one item which tapped the child's music preference; its loading was .87.

A third approach utilized to determine the validity of the CAS compared first, third, and sixth graders' scores. It was hypothesized that as students acquired more education and thus became increasingly involved with American institutions, their acculturation scores would increase, indicating that they have become more acculturated. The mean

acculturation scores for the first-, third-, and sixth-grade Mexican American students were 2.36, SD = .76, n = 42; 2.69, SD = .56, n = 47; and 2.95, SD = .53, n = 52, respectively. An analysis of variance revealed a significant difference between means, $F(2, 136) = 10.65$, $p \leq .01$, indicating that students at higher grade levels had higher acculturation scores.

As a means of assessing whether CAS indeed measures differences in the predicted direction between Mexican Americans and Anglos, students from these two groups were rated on the CAS. The Mexican American students (n = 141) obtained a mean of 2.72 (SD = .59) and the Anglo students (n = 34) obtained a mean of 4.14 (SD = .53). The t test yielded a value of 12.62 which is significant at the .001 level.

Acculturation and Mental Health

The relation between acculturation and mental health is just now being investigated (Padilla, Olmedo, & Loya, 1982; Lang, Munoz, Bernal, & Sorensen, 1982). Studies which have investigated this relationship have tended to focus on a specific variable, for example, self-disclosure (LeVine & Franco, 1981), self exploration (Banks, 1972; Grantham, 1973), and self-concept (Franco, 1983; Dworkin, 1975; Maldonado & Cross, 1977).

Franco (1983) obtained measures of self-concept and acculturation on 92 Anglo and 219 Mexican American students from two school districts, one rural and one urban. The self-concept scores were then analyzed using the following independent variables: school setting (urban vs rural), grade level (first, third, sixth, and twelfth) and

student ethnicity (Anglo vs Mexican American) and level of acculturation. Using the self-concept scores as the dependent variable, the only significant difference was a result of one third grade class where the Anglo students scored significantly higher than everybody else. This study needs to be replicated because of this apparent discrepancy in the data.

Interestingly, the Mexican American school children's self-concept scores remained relatively stable throughout the school years, increasing slightly as they progressed through school. It had been hypothesized that children of both ethnic groups would start out feeling equally well about themselves, but that the unacculturated Mexican American child would start feeling worse about himself/herself as they encountered difficulty competing in the classroom (primarily because of a lack of English proficiency) up until they learn English and learn "how to play the game." It was hypothesized that after they acquired the skills needed to compete, they would start feeling better about themselves. This should take place at about the sixth grade, at the level in which most of the studies on self-concept are conducted. This hypothesis did not hold up in the study.

There was, however, a significant correlation between acculturation and self-concept as determined by the Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = .36$, $p \leq .01$).

In a study using the same subjects as above, Franco and Malloy (1983) used the acculturation variable as a covariate. Analyzing the total self-concept score on the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale (1969), no significant differences were found. However, when the subscale

scores of the Piers-Harris (Behavior, Happiness and Satisfaction, Intellectual and School Status, Physical Appearance, Anxiety, and Popularity) were analyzed using a split-plot statistical design, with acculturation as a covariate, several significant results appeared. On the Behavior self-concept scale, sixth grade Anglo students scored significantly ($p < .001$) higher than all other groups. Seniors scored significantly higher ($p < .05$) than first graders on the Happiness and Satisfaction scale. On the Physical Appearance and Anxiety subscales, males scored significantly higher than females ($p < .01$).

On the Popularity self-concept sub-scale, Mexican Americans in the sixth, ninth, and twelfth grades scored higher than first or third grade Mexican Americans and sixth grade Mexican Americans scored higher than sixth grade Anglos.

When the Intelligence/School self-concept score was analyzed, only the covariate (acculturation) was significant (although this was the only time this covariate appeared to be significant). In general, the higher the acculturation score the higher the Intelligence/School self-concept score.

In summary, the Mexican American school children's self-concept scores remained relatively stable throughout the school years, increasing slightly as they progressed through school. This is contrary to the claim made by some (Aragon, Note 1; Steiner, 1970) that Mexican American children leave the school system feeling worse about themselves than they did when they entered the system. In fact, when the data was analyzed for the two ethnic groups independently, no significant differences appeared for the Mexican American sample when

the following independent variables were investigated: school setting, grade level, acculturation level, and gender.

There is no support in the results of this study for the argument that Mexican American children leave school feeling worse about themselves than when they entered, although the argument could still be made that those with low self-esteem have dropped out of school and we are examining only those who have remained. This hypothesis should be tested. Nor is there any basis to the argument that the high academic failure rate of Mexican Americans is due to low self-concepts. In some instances, Mexican Americans felt better about themselves than did Anglos.

In investigating acculturation as a moderator variable on self-disclosure Franco, Malloy, and Gonzalez (in press) analyzed the responses of 42 male and 116 female Anglo American and 31 male and 87 female Mexican American freshman and sophomore students at a southwestern university on a measure of self-disclosure. Four graduate students who could easily be identified as either Anglo or Mexican American, male or female, were trained to administer Jourard's Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (1964) and the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans (Cuellar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980). The administrations were standardized so that the administrator assumed a neutral verbal stance, offering directions in a clear, concise manner with little casual conversation or affect expressed (previous studies have shown that administrators' verbal style can effect respondent behavior; LeVine & Franco, in press).

Self-disclosure patterns were analyzed according to frequency of reported self-disclosure, preferred topics (whether about taste, attitude, personality, or money) and preferred targets (whether to mother, father, male friend, or female friend). Using analysis of covariance (with acculturation as the covariate) the researchers found that the covariate accounted for a significant degree of the variance on three measures: reported self-disclosure to mother, reported self-disclosure regarding money, and the body (all $p \leq .05$). These results provided evidence that reported self-disclosure on at least three dimensions was significantly related to the degree of the subjects' acculturation level.

In this portion of the analysis, both Anglo and Hispanic subjects were necessarily considered together. Since intuitively it seemed that the relationship between reported self-disclosure and level of acculturation may be much more significant for Hispanic subjects the decision was made to reanalyze the data excluding all Anglo subjects.

Among the Hispanic subjects the mean acculturation score was 3.44 with a standard deviation of .6, with scores ranging from a low of 1.95 to a high of 4.80. A measure of the third moment or skewness of -.469 suggested that the distribution was negatively skewed with a majority of scores falling above the mean. This result is not unexpected in that the subjects were college students and are probably more acculturated than less educated groups of Hispanic subjects may be.

Among the Hispanic subsample significant gender differences were observed on reported self-disclosure to mother (F (1, 117) = 4.79, $p < .03$) and female friend (F (1, 117) = 14.51, $p < .001$). On both

variables Hispanic females reported significantly more self-disclosure than Hispanic males to these two targets. Hispanic females also reported significantly more self-disclosure than Hispanic males on reported self-disclosure regarding personal matters (F (1, 117) = 9.37, $p < .003$) and the body (F (1, 117) = 4.80, $p < .03$).

A single statistically significant interaction due to administrator and subject gender was observed among the Hispanic sample on the variable reported self-disclosure regarding money (F (3, 117) = 2.78, $p < .04$). The results indicated that Hispanic males and females reported essentially similar levels of self-disclosure regarding money to Hispanic male and Anglo male administrators. However, it was observed that Hispanic males reported significantly less disclosure regarding money to a Hispanic female, while Hispanic females reported significantly more disclosure about this topic to an Anglo female administrator.

Increasingly, studies are looking at the total picture of adjustment as opposed to single variables. Lang, Munoz, Bernal, and Sorensen (1982) conducted a telephone survey of 170 randomly selected adult Hispanics to determine the characteristics of well adjusted Latins in San Francisco. They investigated five areas: sample demographics, acculturation, quality of life components, psychological well-being, and depression levels. Hispanics of 18 national origins were included in the sample. Using the Global Acculturation Scale, which was specifically designed for this study, the researchers found that the best-adjusted "Latinos" (those who were satisfied with their lives and were subjectively happy) were bicultural, although oriented

more toward the Latino culture. The sample quality of life depended on determiners similar to that of the United States mainstream culture: family, work, having children, physical health, education, spouse relationship, and religion. Though mental health did not have a strong linear relationship to level of acculturation, Hispanics who were not well adjusted had significantly lower levels of acculturation than the individuals who were well adjusted. Also, the level of acculturation that was found to be associated with a healthy psychological adjustment within a bicultural community was a bicultural orientation.

Lang, et al. (1982), state that "the relationship between acculturation and psychological adjustment can be represented by means of a curvilinear graph, in the shape of an inverted "U" in which the least adjusted individuals were found to be either monocultural Latino or monocultural United States mainstream, and the best adjusted individuals were found to be bicultural/bilingual" (p. 447). The authors reason that this phenomenon may explain why there appears to be a weak relationship between level of acculturation and psychological adjustment.

Padilla, et al. (1982), used the MMPI and a four dimensional measure of acculturation to "explore, within a multivariate framework, the potential interrelationships between psychometrically defined acculturation and MMPI scale scores for Chicano and Anglo college students." Using canonical correlational analysis, two of the correlations were significant. Differences in language use, generation, and citizenship of head of household were related to differences on L, Hs, and MF scales, with less acculturated subjects

scoring higher on L and Hs and lower on the MF scale. Differences in socioeconomic status and attitudes toward the concept "male" were related to differences on L, K, and Pd scales, with less acculturated students scoring lower on L and K, and higher on Pd. This finding suggests that socioeconomic and attitudinal variables may moderate MMPI performance in a different fashion than linguistic and generational factors.

Padilla, et al. (1982), state that since this study dealt with a normal sample of college students, the findings suggest that the valid interpretation of MMPI profiles within culturally diverse settings may be quite complex, requiring more sophistication than would simply be provided by ethnic specific norms. Their results indicate that "normative standards not only vary as a function of ethnic group membership, but also as a function of differential acculturation levels for individuals within the ethnic group. Particularly intriguing is the suggestion that orthogonal dimensions of acculturation can have opposite effects on a scale (p. 463).

Most of these studies, however, use college students or other adult samples (see, for example, Butcher, Ball, & Ray, 1964; McGill, 1980). There is a dire need, therefore, to investigate the effect of acculturation on adjustment for young children. It would appear that certainly at this level, the old adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" certainly applies.

Vigil (1979) conducted an investigation of the adaptation strategies utilized by students in an urban and suburban high school to determine the effect of different environments on the acculturation of

Mexican American adolescents. The study focused on two contrasting habitats in greater East Los Angeles--an urban area that is predominately "Mexican" in ethnic composition and a suburban area that is primarily Anglo. The purpose of the study was to analyze the strategies used by Mexican American adolescents in coping with familial, educational, and societal pressures to conform to one or the other of their two cultural orientations. A questionnaire was administered to 80 students and 12 were selected as being the two most nativist (Mexican-oriented), the two most intermediate (Chicano-oriented), and the two most acculturated (Anglo-oriented) from each school (urban and suburban).

In-depth case studies focusing on differences in life styles were completed on the 12 students. Vigil found that along the urban-suburban dimension, the urban group, particularly the Chicano- and the Anglo-oriented students, generally exhibit more signs of experiencing stress. The Chicano-oriented students through gang-related activities, and the Anglo-oriented students through their inability to fully acculturate. In comparison, the urban Mexican-oriented students showed more confidence in their ethnic identification. This confidence, together with stable familial support, has resulted in a relatively better educational record, reports Vigil.

Vigil found that the suburban students of each category are affected by cultural transition in a somewhat different manner. While more complete acculturation is possible in the Anglo-dominated habitat, the process is still associated with feelings of anxiety or negativism. The Mexican-oriented students find that the suburban habitat is not

entirely suited for the full retention and practice of their avowed cultural life style. The Chicano-oriented students lean more toward the Anglo side of the spectrum. Interestingly, however, they still participate in some form of gang behavior, although to a less intense and debilitating degree than is found in the urban environment.

Discussion

The review of the literature substantiates the idea that the process of acculturation is stressful and impacts on adjustment. It is also quite clear that acculturation is a multidimensional process but it is not quite clear what impact the different dimensions have on acculturations. It appears that some dimensions have a more negative effect than others.

Many of the studies that have been conducted in which majority/minority culture comparisons are made need to be replicated to investigate within-group variability. The lumping together of all members of a minority group has a tendency to hide otherwise useful information. Contemporary studies should make use of some measure of acculturation when sampling from minority groups, particularly Hispanics.

Further, in investigating the impact of acculturation on personality variables, we need to focus on a broader spectrum of acculturation. Many studies have used the college sophomore. While studies with this limited sample does provide some pertinent information, it is impossible to make generalizations beyond this population. The Hispanic college student is already a very

acculturated individual and, therefore, provides us with little or no information about less acculturated individuals.

While we need to keep investigating for the relationship between adjustment and acculturation, studies analyzing variables like self-disclosure and self-concept in isolation have severe limitations. It makes sense to use more multivariate approaches where several dependent and independent variables are considered at the same time. Further, in analyzing global variables like self-concept and self-disclosure researchers need to consider the specific self-concept of interest (e.g., academic, social, physical, etc.). In self-disclosure researchers need to ask questions like self-disclosing to whom, about what, under what circumstances. And, at the same time, within-group differences need to be considered.

Current research points to the need for looking at the different dimensions of acculturation. It appears that these dimensions may be having a differential impact on personality variables. Therefore, the process of acculturation needs to be looked at closer concomitantly with the relationship between acculturation and coping.

Finally, more emphasis needs to be placed on investigating the process of acculturation in Mexican American children and its relationship to mental health adjustment. Particularly, the "acculturation gap" phenomenon, where there is great disparity in acculturation levels between the children and their parents. While some difference in acculturation levels between parents and offspring is expected because of normal evolution with each generation being more acculturated than the previous one, more severe family disruption can

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occur when children are forced to acculturate too quickly by well-intentioned parents (or children themselves choosing to break all ties with their cultural past).

In an informal survey of parents who have coerced their children to accept only the majority culture's language, values, mores, etc., while sacrificing the minority culture's traits, this writer has found that most of these parents regret having done so. They realize, too late, that in most cases children can readily adapt to both cultures, selecting the best of both, when provided with the right guidance and nurturance.

Most often we underestimate the ability of children to cope and to learn when provided with the right environment. At the same time, we bombard them with mixed messages. We tell them not to smoke while Daddy puffs on a cigarette; the mother tells them to speak only English while she is speaking in Spanish to Grandmother; school officials tell them to be proud of their heritage but not to speak Spanish on the school grounds; and even their peers tell them not to forget where they came from, while making fun of them for bringing burritos to school in their lunchbox.

It takes a lot of effort to make children maladjusted, but for a large proportion of our population we have done just that. Mexican American children, like many children in this country, are in the fortunate position of being able to take the best of two or more cultures and use it to their advantage. They only need a little help from their friends.

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